

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 12-15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 over Blomqvist et al, which corresponds to the Finnish patent that is mentioned on page 1 of this application. Claims 1, 2 and 10-16 have been replaced with new claims 17-40. It is believed that the new claims distinguish the invention clearly over the disclosure of Blomqvist et al.

In accordance with the invention, as defined in claims 17 and 29, the guide surfaces of the gas control element are spaced from the support elements. As set forth in claim 17, this spacing provides a gas flow channel between each support element and the gas control element. Claim 29 further recites that the spacing enables flow of gas between the support element and the control element. In the illustrated embodiment of the invention, this gas flow is facilitated by the increasing width of the flow channel with distance from the common plane containing the central axes of the cylindrical support elements and the gas control element, as shown particularly in FIGS. 2 and 4 of the drawings. Provision of the gas flow channel distinguishes the invention over the disclosure of Blomqvist et al, in which the large roller 5 is formed with recesses that contain the small rollers 7 and are bounded by cylindrical surfaces that extend almost entirely around the small rollers and are closely spaced from the small rollers so as to prevent flow of gas between the small roller and the large roller. It is therefore clear that in Blomqvist the large roller is designed to prevent flow of gas between the small and large rollers. Applicant therefore submits that claims 17 and 29 are patentable over the disclosure of Blomqvist et al.

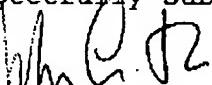
Claims 18 and 30 recite that the gas flow channel increases in width with distance from the common plane in which the central axes of the control element and the support elements are disposed. This feature is not disclosed or suggested by Blomqvist et al and accordingly claims 18 and 30 are patentable independently of claims 17 and 29 respectively.

Claims 19 and 31 each recite that the first guide surface has a center of curvature that is farther than the central axis of the control element from the central axis of the first support element. Thus, viewing FIG. 2, if we consider the upper support element to be the first support element, claims 19 and 31 require that the center of

curvature of the upper guide surface of the gas control element be above the central axis of the upper support element. Consequently, instead of the spacing between the outer surface of the upper support element and the first guide surface being uniform, as shown by Blomqvist et al, the space increases in width with distance from the common plane. Therefore, claims 19 and 31 are patentable independently of claims 17 and 29 respectively.

The examiner has indicated that claims 10, 11 and 16 contain allowable subject matter. The subject matter of claims 10, 11 and 16 is claimed in the new claims 23-25 and claims 35-37. Applicant therefore submits that these claims are patentable.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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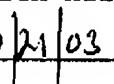
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